United Nations S/PV.7918

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7918th meeting
Thursday, 6 April 2017, 4.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Haley/Ms. Sison	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Peacekeeping operations review

Letter dated 4 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2017/287)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Peacekeeping operations review

Letter dated 4 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2017/287)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/287, which contains a letter dated 4 April 2017 from my delegation addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: United Nations peacekeeping is an investment in global peace, security and prosperity. Around the world, Blue Helmets are the concrete expression of the determination of the Charter of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". The achievements of peace operations are a source of great pride to us all. When they fail, it causes us pain and drives us to improve. United Nations peacekeepers have contributed to a legacy of stability from El Salvador to Namibia, from East Timor to Côte d'Ivoire and from Mozambique to Cambodia. Fifty-four missions have completed their mandates and closed; two more will do so in the coming months. That is our objective for every peacekeeping mission — to do the job entrusted to it; to save lives; to prevent mass atrocities; to set the stage for stability and sustainable peace; and to close. And, from start to finish, to be cost-effective. Today's peacekeeping budget is less than half of 1 per cent of global military spending.

At the start of my first day in office, I laid a wreath to honour the more than 3,500 fallen peacekeepers who have given their lives for the ideals of the United Nations Charter. We owe them a great debt for their dedication and courage. The safety of peacekeepers will remain our priority.

(*spoke in French*)

United Nations peacekeeping operations are very diverse and are conducted in extremely complex environments. It is our shared responsibility to enable them to adapt to our changing world. As the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations clearly stated, our ambitions do not match our capabilities, and our goals are not commensurate with the resources available for them. That is why peacekeeping operations often seem to be at a standstill and unable to keep up with the magnitude of their task. In many cases Blue Helmets are deployed in places where peace itself is at stake. At times they have to face hostility and a lack of cooperation from host Governments. At times their security is seriously threatened by terrorism, proliferating arms and the growth of transnational crime. We also see a disconnect between political processes and some of our major operations, which can seem to be at an impasse with no real prospect of progress.

Those are the challenges we must face together. In the Secretariat, we must be more effective, more efficient and more accountable for our actions.

We are counting on the General Assembly to give us strong political support and to relax the rules and regulations in order to facilitate our work. We rely on troop- and police-contributing countries to deploy dedicated and well-trained personnel. We rely on countries that are near conflict zones and on regional organizations to respect their obligations with regard to peace operations. We rely on the full support of host countries. Above all, we rely on the Council to show unity and to adopt clear and achievable mandates.

The United Nations derives its legitimacy from the trust placed in it by the peoples of the world. However, that trust has been shaken by the appalling cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that have tarnished the image of the Organization as a whole, as well as that of some of our peacekeeping missions. I have presented my plan to combat this scourge and I am determined to implement it, with the support of members.

(*spoke in English*)

We need a comprehensive strategy that supports the diverse range of our missions and takes account of the entire peace continuum, from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and long-

term development. This strategy must be based on two overriding principles.

First, there is no one-size-fits-all peace operation. While some missions have straightforward mandates that focus on separating warring parties or monitoring ceasefires in a relatively stable environment, others have more robust mandates, such as to protect civilians and deal with multiple armed groups. The protection of civilians will continue to be a key priority for peacekeeping. We are supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia, which is backed by a Security Council mandate. In Mali, while United Nations peacekeepers are not and should not be directly engaged in fighting terrorism, they coordinate with counter-terrorist forces. The Council recently expressed its support for the regional initiative by Member States in the Lake Chad basin to develop a multinational joint task force to combat Boko Haram.

Finally, our political missions are supporting peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan and Iraq, together with development agencies and others. All these operations play a vital role in building and sustaining peace. But our political strategies, management systems and administration are not set up to support them effectively. We must plan for diversity across time and geography, creating flexibility without additional costs.

Secondly, the success of every mission depends on an active political process, with the commitment of all stakeholders, particularly Governments. The Council has a vital role to play in securing this commitment and cooperation. I will personally support this goal in any way possible. I have spoken before to the Council about the urgency and necessity of a surge in diplomacy for peace.

We have already made important recent reforms to peacekeeping. I thank Mr. Hervé Ladsous for his important role, and count on the continued leadership of Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix. We have increased the number of troop- and police-contributing countries and improved the generation of forces so that they can be deployed more quickly. Modern technologies are improving situational awareness and analysis. We have decentralized key functions, and we are strengthening performance management and accountability. These reforms have reduced the cost per capita of uniformed peacekeepers by 18 per cent since 2008, and decreased the number of civilian staff significantly. But much remains to be done.

In the short term, we must end operations that have achieved their goals and reform those that no longer meet needs on the ground. Our missions in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia will soon close, and we must consider reforms and exit strategies for other long-standing missions. In Haiti, we are ready to transform our mission so that it will focus on political support, institution-building and development. In Darfur, the changing situation on the ground may call for a significant reduction of forces. Each mission must be considered in its unique political context. In that spirit, I commend the Council's unanimous decision last week to renew the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the longer-term, I see nine areas for reform.

First, I have established a team to examine how to improve our peace and security architecture, which will report to me by June.

Second, we need greater efficiency and accountability. Too many of the rules and regulations of the Secretariat seem designed to prevent rather than facilitate our work. I am committed to changing this, and I hope Member States will support me, including in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly.

Third, peacekeeping operations need clear, realistic and up-to-date mandates from the Council, with well-identified priorities, adequate sequencing and flexibility to evolve over time.

Fourth, women must play a far more active role in peace operations, as troops, police and civilian staff. This is not only because gender parity is essential for its own sake, but because the involvement of women is proven to increase the chances of sustained peace, and to reduce incidences of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Fifth, we need better and more coordinated planning, control and leadership of our operations and strategy. The creation of an executive committee and closer cooperation between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations are aimed precisely at addressing that. I also plan further decentralization to empower my Special Representatives.

Sixth, we must increase the use of modern technology. This will help us to become more flexible and mobile. I encourage the trilateral arrangements through which countries with the capacity to do so are providing training and equipment to peace operations.

But, alongside these arrangements, I count on these countries to step up their troop contributions.

Seventh, we need to communicate and to increase awareness that United Nations peacekeeping operations are a necessity for global peace, security and prosperity, and that they are achieving results.

Eighth, we need to deepen ties with our regional and subregional partners. At the African Union summit earlier this year, I committed to strengthening our partnership on political issues and peace operations, with stronger mutual support and continued capacity-building. United Nations peace operations will continue to need the vital partnership of the European Union. As the security of Europe is directly affected by situations in which peacekeeping missions are deployed, it is likely that there will be further opportunities for cooperation. It is equally important to develop our relationships with subregional organizations including the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and others. I call on the Council to consider supporting the initiative proposed by the Group of Five for the Sahel.

Ninth and finally, these partnerships must be based on solid, predictable funding. I hope the Council will consider supporting missions that are backed by a Council resolution, either with assessed contributions or by promoting other predictable financing mechanisms.

Peace operations are at a crossroads. Our task is to keep them relevant with clear and achievable mandates, and the right strategies and support. Success depends on our collective efforts. The Council can count on my full commitment, but I also count on the unity and support of the Council. I count on it to fulfil its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security in this changing world.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank the United States, which is presiding over the Council for the month of April, for having taken the initiative to organize this important meeting on the review of peacekeeping operations, a subject of great importance to my country.

The Council has entrusted us with the chairmanship of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. More importantly, Senegal has been involved in peacekeeping operations since it became independent in 1960, when it deployed a military contingent in the Congo. Today, the Senegalese security and defence forces are deployed in eight United Nations peacekeeping missions. Given their importance, I will enumerate them. There is the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire — which is now concluded — and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau. Overall 3,638 people, including 97 women, are deployed.

Senegalese army officers hold the following posts: Force Commander of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Deputy Force Commander of the police component of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and Chief of Staff of the Office of Military Affairs in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations here at the Secretariat in New York. That places my country fifth among troop- and police-contributing countries and first among police-contributing countries.

My country is not committed to United Nations peace operations alone. Senegal currently fields a company size combat force, a level two rural hospital in Guinea-Bissau and a unit of 250-strong in the Gambia, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States.

I mention those details to highlight the importance of today's meeting to us. United Nations peacekeeping operations continue to face political, security, strategic, operational and financial challenges in ensuring effective peacekeeping in an ever-changing environment. Such missions are often called upon to protect civilian populations in very complex situations, with limited, and, at times, inadequate resources and operational capacity. They are increasingly deployed in complex environments that are hostile and pose a threat to their own security, not to mention, at times,

misunderstandings that emerge during coordination efforts with host countries and local partners.

In addition, it must be acknowledged that there is now a genuine need to adapt peace operations to each area's unique challenges because each operation involves risk. We discussed the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) earlier today (see S/PV.7917). Despite the signature of a peace agreement between the Government and the main armed groups, MINUSMA operates in a difficult environment, characterized by attacks that target United Nations personnel and civilian populations and infrastructure. Despite the adoption of a revised strategic concept, in line with resolution 2285 (2016), several needs remain unmet and it is still difficult for MINUSMA to marshal the resources necessary, in particular independent logistical support and important materials.

It is therefore important to provide United Nations missions with the capacity and resources necessary to enable them to effectively discharge their mandates, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians. It would be even better to ensure that their mandates are feasible and appropriate to the situation on the ground. That is why my country convened a high-level debate here in the Council in November 2016 (see S/PV.7802), during its presidency of the Security Council. The aim of that meeting was to put greater emphasis on the assymetric threats that peace operations face. When designing mandates, we need in-depth analysis that is as objective and as comprehensive as possible. That entails conducting an earnest and clear assessment of human resource, financial and logistical requirements prior to the deployment of missions.

When clear, realistic and feasible mandates exist, with the political support required, peace operations are some of the Organization's most flexible and appropriate tools for meeting the challenges in maintaining international peace and security. Today, however, peace operations encounter major difficulties and restrictions that prevent them from fully carrying out their mandates, such as conflict or the hostility they face in many areas. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, MONUSCO and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan are but a few examples that illustrate the importance of the political dimension in allowing peace operations to effectively carry out their mandates.

In a country such as South Sudan, in which a viable political process is emerging, there is a vast and urgent need for protection. A political, interdependent effort is therefore imperative to enable missions to successfully discharge their duties, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians. Similarly, above and beyond receiving the consent of host States, we must also seek to secure their cooperation because it is the best way to overcome some of the challenges. In addition, missions must make every effort to establish and maintain trust with host States and populations.

The issue of accepting risk when peacekeepers are deployed in conflict situations in which civilians are the targets of direct attacks must be analysed objectively to prevent the credibility of missions from being undermined by their lack of action in such circumstances. In addition, a viable political strategy must underpin the work of United Nations missions. Reviews must be conducted, such as those commissioned by the United Nations in 2015 on peace operations, peacebuilding and the women and peace and security agenda. There is no doubt that peace operations, as political tools, could assist in advancing the fundamental goals of conflict prevention, mediation, the protection of civilians and peacekeeping. Without a political settlement that leads to the presence of a legitimate Government in a State willing and able to ensure the safety of its population, essential duties, such as the protection of those populations, cannot be properly guaranteed.

It is also true that Blue Helmets could assist in establishing and supporting a political process to protect civilians by helping national stakeholders to fulfil their obligations. The Blue Helmets cannot replace them, however. Because its primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace ans security, the Security Council has a central role to play in making peace operations more suitable for their respective environments and contexts. An early political commitment from the Security Council prior to deployment and for the duration of missions is vital.

In our view, it would be wise to underscore the importance of inclusive national reconciliation that is tied to the twin process of security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration in order to draw up a new social contract that is informed by the trust of civilian populations and the professionalism of security and defence forces. Such efforts are geared towards preventing the resurgence of conflict. Together with the African Union, the Security

Council must continue discussions on predictable and lasting funding of African Union peacekeeping operations, in accordance with resolution 2320 (2016), adopted in November 2016 during the Senegal's presidency of the Council. Senegal reiterates that it has been committed since 1960 to maintaining international peace and security.

In conclusion, I would say that we must continue the much needed process of reforming peacekeeping operations. I would even say that we must accelerate the process, in order to make it more suitable for meeting present and future needs and challenges. In that regard, the recommendations put forward by eminent persons in the various reports, as well as those adopted by the General Assembly, contain ambitious measures in key areas, such as the modernization of troop equipment, the training of personnel and increased financial support for peace operations. The effective implementation of such recommendations would enable peacekeeping operations to enter a new phase in successfully carrying out their missions, thanks to ongoing dialogue, including on mandate design and continuity, among the various stakeholders, such as the troop-contributing countries, the Security Council, the Secretariat and host countries.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the United States for taking the initiative to convene today's meeting. I wish in particular to thank the Secretary-General for his presence here today and for his statement and the concepts set forth in it. We have taken note of the nine points that formed the basis of his briefing.

Almost two years since the publication of the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, better known as the HIPPO report (see S/2015/446), Uruguay believes that the report's recommendations are still valid and that the Member States must continue to work towards implementing them. In that regard, many of the questions raised in the presidency's concept note (see S/2017/287, annex) are found in the HIPPO report and its recommendations.

As a State Member of the United Nations, an elected member of the Security Council and a troop- and police-contributing country, Uruguay supports the peacekeeping operations review process with a view to making it more efficient and effective, and to ensure that they can truly fulfil the purposes for which they were designed.

In our view, peacekeeping operations are the shared responsibility of three actors: the Security Council, States or parties to peacekeeping operations, and countries contributing troops and police personnel. Each of these actors has its role to play; each has a responsibility to shoulder. The Security Council must assume its multiple responsibilities to ensure that peacekeeping operations are efficient. Therefore, as mentioned in the HIPPO report, political solutions must always underpin the design and deployment of peacekeeping operations, and political momentum must be maintained. We must always bear in mind that lasting peace is not achieved by nor is it maintained through military and technical interventions, but rather thanks to political solutions.

Accordingly, the political strategies underpinning peacekeeping operations must have the support of a united Security Council. Experience has shown and continues to show that when there is a lack of unity in the Council and the lack of a clear role in the support of the peace process, the success of a peacekeeping operation can be seriously compromised. Such was the case — let us be sincere here — with the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. Furthermore, and notwithstanding the unity in the Security Council, the primacy of politics is the responsibility of national institutions and their political stakeholders. The United Nations and regional organizations can only back and facilitate the peace process, but not much can be achieved if national stakeholders do not show a genuine commitment to a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Another critical responsibility of the Security Council is to ensure that peacekeeping operations are more flexible, have clear, priority-based mandates, and are capable of adjusting to changing realities on the ground. Over the past few months, we have seen efforts undertaken to that end, for example, the development of the mandates for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where tasks have been established based on clearly defined priorities. However, much remains to be done.

In addition, once a peacekeeping operation has been deployed with a valid mandate, the Security Council is duty-bound to require and obtain from host States full respect for and compliance with the terms agreed upon in the relevant status of forces agreement. These

documents are the guarantees that protect the personnel that a country voluntarily contributes to peacekeeping operations. Therefore, any violation of these agreements is simply unacceptable and cannot be tolerated. Such actions seriously affect the performance of missions and prevent them from faithfully discharging their assigned tasks. I would mention here limitations on the freedom of movement, restrictions on access to certain areas, bureaucratic obstacles with respect to the delivery of visas or the shipping of containers with United Nations equipment, refusal to allow the deployment of new forces, or expulsion of peacekeeping personnel, all of which impede the full functionality of a mission.

Troop- and police-contributing countries must also shoulder their share of the burden, as they are the ones acting on the ground and they have to implement an operation's mandate. It is essential that the deployed peacekeeping personnel is properly trained, skilled and equipped to carry out all of the tasks set forth in the mandate. Therefore, national restrictions — known as caveats — whether they are declared or, worse, undeclared, the absence of effective command and control, the refusal to obey orders, the failure to respond to attacks against civilians and inadequate equipment cannot be tolerated because they have an adverse effect on the shared responsibility for effectively discharging the mandates.

Unfortunately, we have seen this type of situation in several peacekeeping operations, and not only at the level of the contingents and the police forces, but also in the leadership of the missions and their chain of command, especially in high-pressure environments where civilians need protection. On this point, I wish to stress the contribution of the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, which Uruguay has joined, with the understanding that they recognize the importance the protection of civilians has at present in preserving the physical and moral integrity of people in conflict situations, particularly the most vulnerable populations. My delegation understands that the Kigali Principles can greatly contribute to the reform process because they are geared towards improving efficiency in the protection of civilians, through training, the behaviour of peacekeeping personnel on the ground and the important element of accountability, especially when they do not rise to occasion of the circumstances.

In conclusion, allow me to assure the Council of Uruguay's commitment to continuing to work in the reform process of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful for the convening of today's meeting and thank Secretary-General António Guterres for sharing his assessment of the situation with respect to United Nations peacekeeping with us.

Peacekeeping is a key instrument in the arsenal of United Nations measures designed to support international peace and security, resolve conflicts and provide support for State-building at the initial post-crisis stage. The increasingly complex character of problems that are spawned by modern crises, the growth in the number and the geographical scope of conflict situations, the rapid political changes, the presence of specific factors that lead to conflict, including terrorism, crime, drug trafficking and other transboundary challenges and threats — all of these point to the need for a transformation of United Nations peacekeeping and raise the issue of the need to enhance its effectiveness.

However, in these difficult conditions, what has not changed is the essence of peacekeeping, namely, that there is no alternative to conflict resolution. It is precisely this priority that the Secretary-General established, and the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations reached the same conclusion previously. It is not by chance that during today's meeting the organizers of the debate suggested that we focus on the need to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping with an emphasis on the political aspects of the peacekeeping missions' actions in the field.

We have to agree that the mandates of some missions have been slow to adapt to new realities on the ground. There is no doubt that there are questions about the effectiveness of the work of the Secretariat on planning the life cycle of missions or the cooperation of missions with the authorities of the host country. It is important to streamline the process of developing an exit strategy and ensuring a smooth transition to the post-conflict rebuilding stage, which would make it possible not only to optimize expenditures but also enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and their impact.

Furthermore, we believe that it is unacceptable to use the practice of having the Secretariat provide requests with estimates for separate components of peacekeeping operations without sufficient justification

for them. Recently, we have also seen the broad artificial expansion of the mandates of peacekeeping operations through the addition of non-core tasks. We have often spoken about the harm of this practice, which significantly reduces the effectiveness of missions.

Let us look at the example of the broadly interpreted tasks of protecting civilians, monitoring human rights, including gender issues, and preventing sexual violence. Those functions are often entrusted to the civilian staff of missions. Deploying and maintaining such personnel is rather expensive. For example, with regard to the Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, almost nearly every one of its components has an expert on outreach to society. There are approximately 30 such experts. Is that really necessary or economically justified?

We are convinced that we should not burden peacekeeping operations with difficultly achieved tasks of a socially humanitarian character. Such factors are not a threat to international peace and security, and come under the purview of other specialized United Nations bodies. It is important to have a carefully balanced approach to dealing with human rights issues in peacekeeping. We do not question the importance of promoting and protecting human rights, but we believe that delegating to United Nations peacekeeping operations human rights functions that fall outside of their field of expertise reduces the effectiveness of achieving their primary goal, which is separating and reconciling the conflicting sides and ultimately saving lives.

It is the successful resolution of a conflict that is the key precondition to improving human rights situations and developing democratic institutions in a specific country, rather than the converse. Excessive attention given to human rights issues often leads to a distorted understanding of the causes of crises and of new challenges and threats, as well as the erroneous interpretation of peacekeeping mission mandates, the lack of their effectiveness and, on occasion, the resultant hostility from host and troop-contributing countries.

There has been an increasing number of proposals to give peacekeeping missions multi-component mandates, including peacebuilding tasks, above all promoting security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and support for the restoration of law-enforcement bodies and the rule of law in general. We believe that such tasks should be specifically targeted to the specific causes of conflicts, thereby ensuring that conflicts do not reignite. Peacekeeping personnel cannot be used as a substitute for national authorities or embedded into domestic political situations.

We believe that reducing financing for certain peacekeeping operations should go hand-in-hand with modifying their mandates, in particular with regard to reducing their parallel non-core tasks that only dilute peacekeeping efforts to address the root causes of conflict. Unquestionably, no matter how the transformation of peacekeeping unfolds, the critical guidelines will be the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of United Nations peacekeeping — the consent of the host country, impartiality and the non-use of force except for self-defence or in order to implement the mandate of the Security Council. Lately, those lements are unfortunately increasingly being considered by some countries almost as an obstacle to implementing missions' mandates. We have heard ideas expressed about the need for their flexible interpretation depending on conditions on the ground. We reiterate, once again, that that is unacceptable. We believe that it is precisely those elements that guarantee the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Every new or emerging area of peacekeeping should strictly adhere to those principles.

We also believe that it is important to warn about attempts to artificially politicize the activity of peacekeepers. We are seriously concerned about the attempts to flexibly interpret the norms of international humanitarian law, in particular as pertaining to the protection of civilians in conditions of armed conflict. Under no circumstances should Blue Helmets become party to a conflict or join those parties. That is precisely what would happen if the Security Council adopted certain proposals made by Member States entertaining the possible use of force by peacekeepers against host States.

Any action allegedly guided by the need to protect the civilian population is unacceptable if it is actually intended to achieve narrow express geopolitical aims, especially if such an action is against the legitimate authorities of sovereign States. As has been illustrated by past experience, that leads to more civilian victims. We do not support the view that has often been expressed that the protection of civilians is the goal in itself of peacekeeping operations in general. I would like to recall once again that the need to protect civilians

is a consequence of conflict and not the cause of a conflict. Effectively ensuring the security of civilians can be achieved only by dealing with the root causes of conflict. Supporting and protecting civilians can be only a temporary measure so as to provide time to find a political and diplomatic solution.

Moreover, we are concerned about certain questions in the concept paper (S/2017/287, annex) with regard to the possibility of missions carrying out their work without the strategic consent of the host country. We believe that that is inappropriate as it runs contrary to one of the basic inviolable principles of peacekeeping, which cannot be revised. At the same time, the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations depends directly on building constructive and mutually respectful relations with the host country and other national actors. That kind of cooperation must not be imposed or artificial. It must be based on the natural wish of the host country to cooperate, and that is a direct consequence of strengthening trust in the work of the mission and its components.

We should not forget that Governments bear the main responsibility for ensuring the security of their people, including security against terrorist attacks. They also bear the main responsibility for establishing the political process, ensuring development and dealing with the root causes of conflict. The international community should provide support to local and regional efforts, but it should provide substitutes for them.

It is difficult not to agree that the current challenges and threats that have changed the character of conflicts require a corresponding adaptability from the Organization. Competent and thorough political and mediation efforts should be a priority in peacekeeping activities. The history of conflicts in various regions of the world has shown that such efforts help address the root causes of conflicts rather than merely treat their symptoms. Otherwise, crises will resurface after a brief pause. United Nations peacekeeping missions and the Blue Helmets should be deployed in places in which they can effectively help while remaining neutral actors and, at the same time, not undertaking functions that fall outside their field of expertise. In order to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeepers in fulfilling their mandates, we should not consider various generic initiatives but, rather, set realistic and clear goals for Blue Helmets and focus on the specific causes and the core problems that are related to every conflict.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I warmly welcome the Secretary-General's briefing. I agree with his nine-point plan for reform and with every other word that he said.

I would like to pay tribute to the brave men and women serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions. For many people around the world, they are all that stands between stability and chaos. More than 3,500 peacekeepers have lost their lives holding that line, including nine this year. We are humbled by their sacrifice.

We have a duty to those peacekeepers, all those risking their lives today and all the people whom they protect, to ask tough, fundamental questions about peacekeeping deployments. Peacekeeping is one of the best things that the Organization has ever established. Peacekeeping is the jewel in the United Nations crown. Peacekeeping is the United Nations unique selling point. Peacekeeping is also a good investment. In human terms, United Nations peacekeeping saves lives. In terms of peace, it significantly increases the survival rate of peace agreements. We should continue to invest in that crucial tool that answers the call to help when no one else comes. But as with all investments, we should examine the market.

First, we must think long and hard before deploying missions and about whether peacekeeping is the right tool at the right moment. Horizon scanning and early warning give us an opportunity to use other tools. Preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, mediation and early action to prevent conflicts and mass human rights abuses remain vital, but those must be begun long before peacekeepers may be required. Too often that moment is missed. When a peacekeeping mission is required, we must ask if that mission has a clear objective and a clear exit strategy. Does it have the right mandate? Will the host Government cooperate? There are at least two ways in which a Government might not cooperate — by opposing the very deployment of a mission or by hindering the mission's ability to fulfill every part of its mandate once it has been deployed.

History has given us enough tragedies to support the deployment of peacekeepers when host Governments are unwilling or unable to protect their own people— with or without the Government's consent. If the host Government does not cooperate, the Council has a crucial role to play. We must ensure that States shoulder their primary responsibility to prevent

conflict, minimize suffering and ensure that cycles of conflict are not repeated. Where there are spoilers to peace, including host Governments that seek to stifle missions, we must use all the tools at our disposal to change that behaviour.

But time after time the message sent by the Council is one of disunity and confusion. We had a chance last year to bring pressure to bear on the parties in South Sudan, but at the crucial moment we failed to deliver. We cannot complain now about the tragic status quo in that country if we are not prepared to act ourselves.

Once deployed, we must recognize when a peacekeeping mission is no longer the right tool for the job, when other parts of the United Nations system are better placed to support development and peacebuilding needs — as in Haiti, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. We know that peacekeeping is but one tool available to the United Nations. It cannot deliver every aspect to the United Nations response to conflict. Peacekeeping should exist alongside both conflict prevention and peacebuilding work.

Where military force is necessary, the United Nations is not the only organization capable of delivering it. We need only look to West Africa, where the Economic Community of West African States has demonstrated regional leadership through deployments in Mali and in support of the political transition in the Gambia. Or to Somalia, where the African Union Mission in Somalia is degrading the threat from the terrorist group Al-Shabaab.

But military operations can only create the space for the political process to progress. We must therefore redouble our efforts to address the political challenges to peace — not only the security ones — if we are to deliver the Secretary-General's agenda on sustaining peace.

My final point is that, if and when we deploy peacekeeping missions, we must make sure that they are effective. That means better mission planning, more pledges of troops and equipment and stronger mission performance. Mandates must be limited, realistic and prioritized, with a clear end goal and the benchmarks for getting there, while building on and complementing the work of other parts of the United Nations so that we can measure the impact of their activity and hand them over when the peacekeeping task is complete.

We must conduct regular and robust reviews of missions to establish where current situation sit on the spectrum of conflict and ensure that we are responding and resourcing them appropriately. Pledges of troops and equipment need to meet specific shortfalls identified by the United Nations, including the deployment of more women. We need to develop a greater breadth and depth of capabilities so that the United Nations can deploy the most appropriate tools to deliver mission mandates.

Ultimately, peacekeeping must perform better. That means high-quality training, appropriate equipment, medical provision and skilled and courageous leadership. Missions are the human face of the Organization to so many people in the world. They have to act to uphold the principles that we all represent, while holding peacekeepers to account for underperformance or misconduct, especially when there are allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Peacekeepers' successes save lives, and we owe it to them and the people they protect to ask those tough questions and find the right answers.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank the United States presidency for underscoring the importance of strengthening the political objectives and dimensions of peacekeeping operations. I also thank the Secretary-General for a very innovative and reformist approach to the entire peacekeeping continuum. We fully support his vision to raise the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations — one that is both timely and needed.

Recent developments in some operations make this debate even more relevant and timely. Peace and security today are threatened as never before. It is therefore necessary to evaluate how the effectiveness of the operations of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations can be enhanced, especially in the face of asymmetrical conflicts and the rise of terrorism and extreme violence.

Despite those limitations, in many countries peacekeeping operations have helped countries to close the chapter of conflict and open a path to normal development. At the same time, United Nations peacekeeping and the response by the international community as a whole have been challenged and found ineffective in some cases. These setbacks provide important lessons for deciding how and when to deploy, and what structure and streamlining is needed to support United Nations peacekeeping. They also serve

as a political tool to restore and maintain international peace and security.

My delegation offers the following observations to ensure a sharper political focus, drawn from current missions as a whole rather than specific cases.

First, peacekeeping, with its operational facets, can never become the overriding focus. It must be considered in conjunction with conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development. Those concerns must all be addressed simultaneously if the root causes of political conflict are to be addressed and the risk of conflicts recurring reduced. All efforts must be based on timely early warning and analysis of the drivers of intra-State or inter-State disputes that escalate into violent conflict.

Second, engaging regional organizations and neighbouring States in resolving conflicts is becoming increasingly important. Recent success stories from the Lake Chad basin and the Great Lakes region, which I visited last month, call for more such joint initiatives by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations. Mediation efforts by neighbouring groups of States and Heads of State have yielded considerable success. They will need to be reinforced by the peace missions of the Department of Political Affairs, the collective United Nations multilateral system, media and civil society — as powerful agents of political change.

Third, the General Assembly and its Member States are also positive political influences for funding and bilateral assistance. Political objectives can only be reached if both the host Government and the parties on the ground take ownership and responsibility.

Fourth, political gains can be sustained only if they are supported by disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; security sector and rule-of-law reforms; and the promotion of human rights. Fragile States must be offered security and assistance programmes to promote their social and economic recovery and their long-term development. It is also necessary to consider if guarantees for the safety and security of United Nations personnel can be reasonably obtained from the main parties or factions.

Fifth, while considering new mandates or extending existing ones, the Security Council must take into account whether the parties to a conflict in a country have committed themselves to a peace process and whether a clear political goal is reflected in the mandate. The Secretary-General and the entire United Nations system should call for a periodic strategic assessment to identify all possible options for United Nations engagement, to determine what actions need to be taken when political processes break down and whether the mission should continue.

Sixth, the Security Council will henceforth be expected to monitor peacekeeping operations more closely and on an ongoing basis, considering the present-day growing threats of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Da'esh, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram and other violent extremist and armed groups. That raises the questions of whether we have sufficient means and resources to do so and how to proceed.

Seventh, funding must also be considered from the overall security, political, military, humanitarian and human rights conditions on the ground when missions begin and when their mandates are extended. If missions are ended or downsized, we must also consider the consequences of those measures and whether the security vacuum will be filled by terrorist groups. The key question is: How do we prevent such groups from making inroads into new territories, thus creating further regional and global insecurities?

Eighth, recent setbacks in the field provide insight for a thorough ongoing evaluation of mission objectives and their completion. It is critical to design proper exit strategies and alternative future arrangements to ensure stabilization after mission withdrawal. Such a framework is necessary for every mission.

Ninth, we appreciate the immense efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support to improve the system of force generation. However, there is room for improvement, such as introducing a rotational system for troop-contributing countries (TCCs). This could create a better environment among TCCs and increase the overall effectiveness of field missions.

Political diplomacy and peacekeeping go hand in hand. There is no body parallel to the United Nations, with its peacekeeping operations and its three essential pillars under the Charter. It is thus up to us to see how best we can deploy and support United Nations peacekeeping as one of the invaluable and indispensable tools in the context of the New Agenda for Peace.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the initiative of the United States to convene this meeting. We thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing and for his nine reform points. China supports the Secretary-General's important efforts to enhance United Nations peacekeeping operations.

In the 70 years since their establishment, United Nations peacekeeping operations have played an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Given the profound changes in the international situation and the increasing complexity of peacekeeping environments and missions, the effective implementation of peacekeeping operations is facing grave challenges. The international community has high expectations for improving United Nations peacekeeping operations, and in this respect I wish to share the following observations.

First, it is key to abide by the basic principles of peacekeeping operations and handle relations with the host country appropriately. The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence or defence of the mandate, otherwise known as the three peacekeeping principles, form the cornerstone of peacekeeping operations and retain an irreplaceable guiding role in the new context.

In carrying out peacekeeping operations, it is important to fully respect the sovereignty of the host country and value its views, assist it in enhancing its security capacity-building, and engage in beneficial interaction with it.

When a host country requests it and the situation allows for the exit of a peacekeeping operation, the Security Council should guide the Secretariat in establishing a clear exit timetable, so as to avoid an indefinite stay on the part of the peacekeeping operation in the host country. Peacekeeping operations must adapt to changing dynamics and adjust their size as appropriate, so as to optimize peacekeeping resource flows and provide tangible assistance to countries with more pressing needs.

Secondly, peacekeeping operations must have clear, actionable and focused mandates. Such operations revolve around the core tasks of conflict resolution and sustaining peace. It is important to plan the mandates of peacekeeping missions with full consideration given to the actual needs of the host country, the security environment on the ground and the capacity of the troop-contributing countries (TCCs), as well as other factors, while adapting its priorities to changing situations at every stage of the mission.

The Secretariat must proceed from the overall perspective and in the long-term interest of maintaining international peace and security, take effective measures to improve the command system for peacekeeping operations, enhance missions' work by improving their efficiency and efficacy and strengthen their ability to respond to complexities so that they can better perform the duties entrusted to them by the Charter of the United Nations.

Thirdly, enhanced communication and coordination with the TCCs is necessary, as they are the main players in peacekeeping operations and have made major contributions and sacrifices to such operations. Peacekeepers from the TCCs have been performing their duties on the front lines and are best informed as to the challenges and difficulties facing them in the fulfilment of their tasks.

The Security Council should enhance communication with TCCs and receive in-depth knowledge of the progress made by peacekeeping operations, the situation in the host country and the difficulties facing TCCs. It must fully respect the views of TCCs and take active measures to enhance the security of peacekeepers and strengthen early-warning capacities with respect to potential security threats, as well as provide enough logistical support to ensure that security and medical equipment, supplies and measures are available.

Nine of the 16 United Nations peacekeeping missions are located in Africa. Twelve of the largest-contributing TCCs are African countries. Enhancing communication and coordination with African countries in the field of peacekeeping and increasing assistance to African countries are imperative in order to effectively improve peacekeeping operations. In recent years, the African Union has been actively committed to enhancing the joint self-reliance of African countries and has achieved considerable success in self-reliant peacekeeping efforts. China has always supported Africa in resolving African issues in an African way. China has always supported the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations in their efforts to play active roles in the resolution of regional issues.

China supports the United Nations in further expanding and deepening its cooperation with the

African Union in the area of peace and security, while listening carefully to the views and concerns of African countries on peacekeeping and actively supporting Africa's peacekeeping capacity-building.

Over the years, African Union-led peacekeeping operations have played a crucial roles. The United Nations should increase its political support to them, provide greater assistance in the areas of staff training, logistical assistance and financial support and give positive consideration to setting up a sustained and stable funding mechanism.

As the biggest TCC among the five permanent members of the Security Council and the second-largest contributor in terms of assessed contributions to United Nations peacekeeping, China has made an important contribution to the cause of United Nations peacekeeping. China is implementing across the board all of the commitments announced by Chinese leaders to further support United Nations peacekeeping operations by actively building up a stand-by peacekeeping force, vigorously advancing the dispatch of helicopters and providing training to peacekeepers from around the world, African countries in particular. China will work to facilitate the China-United Nations peace and development fund's ability to take more concrete action for developing countries, especially African countries, and help Africa to enhance its peacekeeping capacity-building.

China is ready to work together with the broader United Nations membership and make a greater contribution to further improving United Nations peacekeeping operations and better maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I warmly thank the Secretary-General for his important briefing and assure him of France's full support for the approach that he has just set out. I also thank the American presidency for having convened this meeting. The issue bringing us together today, peacekeeping and the men and women serving in peacekeeping operations — the Blue Helmets — are very much the identity and very face of the United Nations.

I should like to make three specific points.

My first is that United Nations peacekeeping operations save lives every day; their work is invaluable. In the past, in Namibia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Slovenia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Timor-Leste and Côte d'Ivoire, and today in the Central African Republic, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Lebanon and Darfur, Blue Helmets have been preventing clashes, protecting civilians and clearing the way for political processes. They do so at a low cost, because the peacekeeping operations budget accounts for only 0.5 per cent of the world's annual global military expenditure. This is therefore an essential and responsible investment.

The major traumas that have taken place since the Second World War occurred where peacekeeping failed — I am thinking here of Srebrenica and Rwanda — and where peacekeeping was not present, such as in Syria. Those failures are rightly etched into our collective memory. But we all know that Blue Helmet bases frequently represent a vulnerable population's only hope in the face of armed groups that terrorize, loot and kill, their only way out and their only recourse, quite simply, for even a chance at survival. Who else would want or be able to ensure the protection of civilians in so many dangerous theatres? On the other hand, who would want to be responsible for abandoning the peoples of South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the Central African Republic to their fate? In that regard, I would like to commend the actions of the almost 110,000 men and women who are deployed and working today to avoid such tragedies, and to pay tribute to the more than 3,400 peacekeepers who have lost their lives on mission since 1948.

My second point is that United Nations peacekeeping is constantly under review and continues to be committed to improving and moving forward. There has been an ongoing focus on improving peacekeeping for years, and much has already been done. The most recent integrated and multidimensional operations are based on a concept whereby their mandates revolve around both immediate and vital priorities, such as the protection of civilians and human rights, and longer-term tasks, such as support to political processes, reforms and the restoration of State authority, which are a guarantee of effectiveness and a successful, sustainable exit from a crisis. Those mandates require an integrated approach on the part of all United Nations actors, including funds, agencies and programmes. The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General have become the conductors orchestrating the continuum of peace, security and development that we try to encourage.

On the operational front, peacekeeping missions are now expected to protect civilians actively and robustly, as the recent actions of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)have shown. We have been scaling up troops, capacities and leadership, as well as training, equipment, intelligence, medical support, language capacities — which the countries of la Francophonie have worked particularly hard to advance — air support and police components. That list is not exhaustive, but these are all areas that are evolving significantly. This is a big effort, and the troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat have put a great deal into it. Thanks to that progress, United Nations operations can bring the greatest legitimacy and the most comprehensive approach in responding to a conflict. National operations such as those that France is deploying in the Sahel and the Central African Republic can act only as supplements, not substitutes. But the United Nations is not always the right tool or the only one. That is where partnering with regional organizations makes sense, and we support the joint United Nations efforts with the African Union under resolution 2320 (2016), based on comparative advantages and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Does that mean that all is well? No, but my third point is that we have to make the right diagnoses and be firm in administering the cures. Some difficulties arise from specific situations, while others are more systemic. Sexual abuse has undermined peacekeepers' integrity and their calling as protectors. Serious failures of the imperative to protect civilians, in South Sudan and elsewhere, are still shocking. From maintaining our zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse to investigating mandate failures, we must do everything possible to correct and prevent such serious dysfunctionality. But overall, our diagnosis must be fair, since some of the structural difficulties of peacekeeping are outside an operation's control. If some remain for too long, or if others seem too timid, that is because they can succeed only if they are based on the triple foundation of a unified Security Council, the joint political willingness of the parties involved to emerge from conflict, and troops who are determined to implement their mandate.

Based on those considerations, France urges that we draw various conclusions that can enable us to continue to adapt peacekeeping to our current challenges. Those conclusions include, first, closing an operation and transferring its responsibilities to the country team when a mandate is fulfilled, as is currently the case with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. To that we could add the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, which have largely achieved their objectives. Drawing the right conclusions also means recognizing that some missions — such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, MINUSCA and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon — must be maintained because they play a vital role, despite the frustrations that can result from the slow pace of political processes.

Drawing the right conclusions also means continuing to work to ensure that the operations are truly in a position to succeed. There are several elements to that. The first is encouraging the Security Council to be united in directing operations. That support is essential to their success. The second is strengthening our support to political processes, including when they are driven by our regional partners, as in South Sudan. Every effort should be made to ensure coherence in our collective action and in achieving results. We should remember that for those political efforts to succeed, the violence has to stop and civilians have to be protected. The third is structuring relationships with host States so that we can have a genuine exchange of commitments and responsibilities. That is why we support mutual commitment frameworks and making them routine. The fourth is continuing our efforts to give operations the right troops, skills and equipment for their mandates. That requires maintaining a tripartite partnership among the Council, the Secretariat and the troop- and police-contributing countries, to which France is an active contributor. Lastly, drawing the right conclusions means being ambitious and demanding in our efforts to better integrate United Nations peacekeeping into its global environment and the peace continuum that the Secretary-General is promoting, with France's full support.

Why has peacekeeping, which began as an ad hoc concept, seen its ambitions and its resources grow in this way? Because it is a tool for all of us, and because it has been proving its usefulness for 60 years. We commend the significant discussion we have had today — for which I would once again like to thank the United States presidency — since it will enable us to

make our collective action stronger and more effective than before.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening today's debate, and the Secretary-General for his statement, which pointed the way to making the radical changes in peacekeeping missions that can make them more fit for our times.

Italy is a global security provider. We are the top contributor of Blue Helmets among Western countries. In addition, we participate in a range of non-United Nations missions, such as those in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, as well as that fighting human trafficking and terrorism in the Mediterranean.

In a world that has seen a dramatic increase in security challenges, peacekeeping continues to be a crucial tool for maintaining peace and security. We should not forget United Nations peacekeeping's many success stories, which we should be building on. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, for example, plays a fundamental role in its interposition between the parties and as a mediator, through its tripartite mechanism. It is a concrete example of conflict prevention through patience, dedication and continued efforts by the parties and of a mission that makes a huge contribution to regional stability. In West Africa — in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire — peace missions achieved their goals thanks also to the political dimension of the United Nations presence, to a coordinated action at the regional level and to the critical role of the Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations Office for West Africa.

As Secretary-General underlined, we need a more holistic approach to peace. Peace operations should be seen in the broader context of prevention, peacebuilding, sustaining peace and post-conflict stabilization, in a sort of peace continuum where the quest for political solutions must be a primary goal. Yet, of course, resources are limited and should be utilized in a cost-effective way, including by progressively closing the gap between the resources the Organization spends on peacekeeping — almost $8 billion — and the budget for mediation and special political missions, which is about $600 million.

We agree that peacekeeping missions should be regularly reviewed to assess their effectiveness, adherence to their mandates and the need for adjustments to address evolving situations. However, when examining or phasing out peacekeeping missions, we should avoid decisions driven only by the need to reduce costs, and avoid early disengagement that may lead to a redeployment of new missions in a deteriorating environment, as was the case in the past. Strategic patience should be at the core of our evaluations.

Peace operations should be shaped by four main principles. The first is the primacy of politics and the centrality of the people. A peacekeeping mission should have as a core objective the support for inclusive political processes aimed at national dialogue and reconciliation. Protecting civilians in conformity with the Kigali Principles, to which Italy subscribed, must also be one of its main functions.

The second principle is mandates. We should define an entry strategy, attainable objectives and measurable benchmarks for all the parties involved. Clear benchmarks for launching a responsible exit strategy should be provided at the outset. Sequenced benchmarks linked to political progress in the country should be established, as well as local ownership of stabilization to prevent dependency of the country on a mission. Mandates of course should also be flexible to evolve as the situation evolves. We should not refrain when possible from phasing out a military mission with a more agile and light-footprint mission based on specialized police units and civilian units focused on stabilization, the rule of law, justice and the protection of civilians.

Thirdly, the involvement of regional actors and the role of regional and subregional organizations are key to establishing an effective and successful political process. In that regard, I wish to mention the report (see S/2008/813) prepared in December 2008 by the group of experts chaired by Romano Prodi, which called for predictable financial support for United Nations-approved African Union peacekeeping missions. In that context, the European Union can also have a major role to play in complementing United Nations efforts on the ground, improving cooperation on mandates and mission planning and concluding agreements to operate jointly with the United Nations, as is already the case in Mali, in the Sahel, and in the Central African Republic.

Fourthly, if we talk about efficiency, intelligence, equipment and training are essential. Technological innovation in particular is crucial to improving the performance of peace missions and increasing the security of peacekeepers, as highlighted by the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in the United Nations

Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which Italy first provided to the mission several years ago.

Finally, training, in particular predeployment and mandate-oriented training, is key. There must be a strong commitment to achieving the highest standards of conduct of United Nations peacekeepers, promoting initiatives between countries, providing training to troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs and PCCs) and donors, including efforts to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation. The long-term challenge consists of promoting the self-sufficiency of TCCs and PCCs. In that regard, allow me to recall Italy's role as a training and logistical hub, thanks to its facilities in Vicenza, in joint venture with the United States, in Brindisi, the Global Service Centre, and in Turin, the United Nations Staff College.

In conclusion, I wish like others to pay tribute to the women and men serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions, and in particular to those who have lost their lives over the years.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I wish to thank you, Madam President, for the timely initiative and the opportunity to have a fruitful discussion on the flagship United Nations activity, namely, its peacekeeping operations. We also commend the Secretary-General for continuing the practice of personal briefings to the Security Council on various critical issues of international peace and security.

It is common wisdom that these days the world is an increasingly dangerous place to live in, warranting more and not less engagement of the United Nations in the area of peace and security. Ukraine, as an active troop- and police-contributor and a country where a foreign-led armed conflict continues to rage, views the issue of maintaining peace and conflict prevention as the most important task of the Organization.

Over the years, peace operations have proved to be an adaptive instrument and contributed to the resolution of numerous conflicts. A number of United Nations peacekeeping success stories have contributed to an increase in demand for United Nations peacekeeping operations, leading to their significant expansion in size, geography, budget and resources as well as in mandates.

Following the report (see S/2015/446) of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, various aspects of peacekeeping operations have been extensively debated both by the General Assembly and the Security Council. We fully share the view that lasting peace is achieved not through military but political solutions. United Nations peacekeeping operations are merely one of the tools to achieve adequate conditions on the ground for advancing a respective peace process.

Peacekeeping operations are a tool, and not a solution, for conflicts. Yet sustainable de-escalation and progress in peaceful settlement and peacebuilding, including holding elections, are not possible without a robust international security presence capable of ensuring and monitoring implementation of all security-related provisions until the legitimate security sector and law-enforcement institutions are established or restored. That is why today United Nations peacekeepers are expected to deliver more. That is why the task of protecting civilians has evolved into an integral part of United Nations peacekeeping. Performance in this area is often decisive for the success and legitimacy of a peace process.

Therefore, even in situations when political negotiations are in a stalemate, peacekeeping operations continue to play an important stabilizing role and should be provided with adequate technical, human and financial resources. If a peacekeeping operation loses the trust of a local population, the political process has minimal chances of succeeding. In that regard, we fully agree with the need to identify the missions that are in need of structural reform and to thoroughly consider every mission's mandate and monitor the efficiency of its implementation, with a focus on the protection of civilians and achieving a political solution. We believe that missions should be provided with clear, coherent, achievable and, at the same time, resilient mandates sufficient to ensure the security and safety of civilians, including stopping illegal inflows of weapons and mercenaries.

Taking into account that the security situation on the ground in conflict areas can change swiftly and dramatically, such mandates should include provisions enabling peacekeeping operations to use force in circumstances of direct threat to its personnel or civilians, including terrorist threats. The Security Council as the one and only United Nations peacekeeping-operations-mandating body should be up to this task.

Another crucial aspect is the timely transition from peacekeeping operations to other forms of United Nations presence. We have witnessed a success story in the steady restoration of peace in Côte d'Ivoire. Ukraine is proud to be among those troop-contributing countries that have actively contributed to this endeavour by supporting the United Nations operation in that country. In that regard, one can clearly see how success is achieved through carefully gauging the nature and strength of United Nations involvement against progress in consolidating stability and peace. We also believe the same approach should be applied to Liberia, which is already on its way forward, assuming full responsibility for its security from the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

Speaking of the right toolbox, United Nations peacekeeping today is trying to address challenges of the twenty-first century using tools from the twentieth century. I would not be divulging a big secret if I said that sometimes United Nations peacekeepers are underequipped and poorly informed, and therefore may refrain from intervening even in the face of terrible atrocities.

As the world's technological revolution continues, the cliché image of a typical United Nations peacekeeper remains that of a soldier in a blue helmet with binoculars. It is high time to transition from traditional peacekeeping to smart, cost-effective peacekeeping by introducing modern technology, from data-gathering to remote observation and non-lethal weapons. That could be of great help with regard to the protection of civilians and, indeed, the entire scope of peacekeeping mandates.

Many of those issues were reflected in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) and the report of the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in United Nations Peacekeeping in 2015. However, besides the introduction of unmanned aircraft in two missions and surveillance balloons in one capital, not much has been implemented since then. Soldiers with binoculars remain. It would seem appropriate to request of the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the Panels' recommendations and prepare a study on the comparative cost effectiveness of digital vis-à-vis traditional peacekeeping. We are confident that the United Nations could benefit immensely from a plethora of technologies to assist peace operations. Missing such opportunities means missing chances for peace, as has happened far too often in the past when the United Nations was ill-equipped to carry out difficult mandates.

One more issue that we should not overlook is overreliance on United Nations mission support. However, in that regard as well, we have to implement a long-term approach. In some cases, host countries are becoming dependent upon a United Nations presence, while in others missions's long-lasting life cycles might be a sign of their indispensable role as a local and regional factor in security issues. We share the vision that our main goal should be to ensure that every United Nations mission is a success story rather than an endless process with no light at the end of the tunnel.

Last but not least, over the past decade, the role of the relevant regional arrangements in promoting peace and security has only expanded. The engagement of the Economic Community of West African States in the Gambian post-electoral crisis is the most recent case in point. The United Nations should therefore build and enhance its strategic partnership with regional organizations by working in concert with them and using the comparative advantage of each actor in peacekeeping and conflict management. If there is a conclusion from the open debate on conflicts in Europe organized by the Ukrainian presidency in February (see S/PV.7886) from which the Council should benefit, it is that kind of interaction is more important today than ever before for cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union and NATO.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of Ukraine to strengthening United Nations peacekeeping operations, and accordingly its readiness to work constructively with all parties involved.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to begin by thanking you, Madam President, for organizing this important meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his useful briefing and, frankly, for having been such a driving force for the revitalization of the United Nations, including in the area of peace and security.

This meeting has certainly attracted a lot of attention within the broader membership of the United Nations. It has also already stimulated interesting discussions among members of the media, academia and civil society organizations. That is indeed a good thing, and we are among those who truly believe that there is a need for a frank discussion on reforming

United Nations peacekeeping operations to make them fit for purpose.

We thank the United States presidency for the concept paper (S/2017/287, annex) framing the topic for our discussion, which we have found useful and carefully crafted.

What we are discussing today is critical for the lead role that the United Nations plays in ensuring international peace and security. That has been a recurring theme in the Security Council. Without any doubt, the whole membership of the United Nations has agreed upon the need to reform peacekeeping. Approximately two years ago, we undertook a major review of peace operations in all their aspects. That was done in close consultation with all Member States and other relevant stakeholders. What essentially guided that major review process was indeed the absolute need for United Nations peacekeeping operations to change, adapt to new circumstances and ensure their increased future effectiveness and appropriate use.

In our opinion, the outcome of the review certainly lived up to expectations in making an array of important recommendations aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of peace operations both at the strategic and operational levels. We believe that the outcome of the review has also raised the extremely pertinent and serious questions that have been brought up by the concept paper, and the review covered much ground in responding to those queries. It therefore appears to us that this meeting affords us a great opportunity to lay a strong foundation for the implementation of most of the recommendations that are contained in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) (see S/2015/446).

We have a Secretary-General who is truly committed to implementing the necessary structural reforms in line with the HIPPO recommendations, and who has already begun to take concrete steps in the direction of improving the peace and security architecture of the United Nations so as to make it fit for purpose and deliver results in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

We should be expected to support him because some of those important reforms cannot be carried out without bringing all Member States on board. Unquestionably, that is frustrating as building the necessary consensus is never easy, but it is absolutely necessary because, as the High-level Independent Panel rightly noted,

> "Many of the constraints to improving peace operations are political in nature, and can be addressed through political will to find compromise and to respond to long-standing challenges" (*S/2015/446, p. 16*).

There is therefore a need to work in close consultation and partnership with troop-contributing countries and other relevant stakeholders.

In the context of our discussion today, I would like to bring up two points. Although they are not new ideas, we feel that they should be underlined. We need to have a clear political strategy to effectively respond to the peace and security challenges affecting us today. The significance of investing in prevention has long been evident. It is not only a matter of being cost-effective; most important, it is a matter of saving lives. That was the primary reason for the establishment of the Organization — to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

Whenever the need arises, we should be able to use the range of tools available in a pragmatic and flexible manner while taking into account the realities on the ground. Peace operations have been and continue to be one of the most important tools in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. If peace operations are guided by a clear political strategy attuned to specific conflict situations, they can indeed deliver better results. The same is true with regard to any given exit strategy, which should be appropriately aligned with the transition from conflict to sustainable peace.

In all our efforts to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness of peace operations, we should therefore be cognizant of the specific context in which such missions operate and the strategy at stake. There should be no one-size-fits-all approach, which could have undesirable consequences. We may perhaps need to look at how the strategic reviews of missions are conducted. There is a feeling that such reviews could be improved to realize their goals.

The other important point that needs to be stressed is the need for global regional partnerships, which is no longer a matter of choice but of necessity. That has been a topic of discussion in the Council, and it is encouraging to know that there is now a greater appreciation of that

important reality. Such partnerships are unquestionably instrumental not only in enhancing the responsiveness of the United Nations to address conflict situations, but also in ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Finally, as one of the leading troop-contributing countries, we definitely attach great importance to strengthening United Nations peace operations in all their aspects. Our long-standing contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations is dictated by a strong conviction because of our history in multilateralism and collective security. This is attested to by our track record of the past 70 years, as well as by the performance of the thousands of our peacekeepers who are currently operating in some of the most volatile conflict situations, making sacrifices for the cause of regional and international peace and security. This, by the way, began in the early 1950s, when, as the representative of France said, peacekeeping was only an ad hoc concept, in its infancy.

Ethiopia is ready to look at the possibility of hosting a high-level open debate at the level of Heads of State and Government in September, during its presidency of the Council, two years after the high-level review on peace operations, with a view to facilitating serious discussions and follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and charting the best way forward.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I thank the presidency for its initiative in convening this briefing today. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres for his informative briefing.

Japan is deeply committed to United Nations peacekeeping and is the third-largest contributor to its budget. We are eager to discuss how this vital tool for international peace and stability can deliver the greatest impact on the ground.

Our goal in reviewing peacekeeping operations should be to ensure that peacekeeping achieves results consistently. It is thus our essential task to undertake serious, well-informed discussions to determine in concrete terms what we want each mission to deliver.

Today's discussion must be put into context: while we should always seek to improve the efficiency of United Nations peacekeeping, overall it is a cost-effective tool. To give just one example, an analysis carried out by the United States Government Accountability Office in 2006 found that the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti was costing less than half of what a United States operation of equal size and duration would have required. Our priority is not to simply scale back or downsize peacekeeping, but to ensure that it is effectively employed where it can make a difference with limited resources.

In the process of reviewing operations, some improvements may take time. But one measure we can implement this very day is to hold more in-depth discussions in the Council on the mandates that we authorize. We tend to add on different capacities to missions in response to individual circumstances, but we must stop to reflect on this habit. The Council has the primary responsibility to identify a mission's core objective and priorities through focused discussions. The clarity and effectiveness of mandates, and thus of peacekeeping itself, stem from the quality of such discussions. This requires us to methodically review and analyse information from the field, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat. A recent good example is the extensive discussion on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between Council members and troop-contributing countries, which resulted in a clearer and better-prioritized mandate.

We must assess whether the continued deployment of a given peacekeeping operation fits the reality on the ground. We often hear that shrinking mandates or troop levels can undermine peace and security if the timing is not right. But this cannot be an excuse for status quo mandate rollovers without serious consideration. We need deeper discussions in the Council to link political processes closely to mandates. We should also consider whether the timing of deployment is appropriate in the conflict spectrum.

We must be prepared to constructively discuss peacekeeping exit strategies with an understanding of the context on the ground, including what would follow on from a premature withdrawal where political solutions are elusive. In doing so, the Council should explore enhanced coordination with the Peacebuilding Commission, which can play an important role in the transition from peacekeeping to post-conflict recovery.

As one means of making peacekeeping even more cost-effective, Japan proposes that we further explore coordinated initiatives to increase personnel capabilities across missions. Individual troop-contributing countries are responsible for ensuring high troop standards, but in many cases enhanced

capacity through additional training can be beneficial. Triangular cooperation among the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries and a third country such as Japan can help ensure that peacekeepers are well prepared for the field. Standardizing this practice could be one way of guaranteeing that missions consistently receive the best personnel to complete their mandates.

We must use United Nations peacekeeping even more effectively so that this vital tool can continue to protect the most vulnerable while fitting into a broader framework for sustaining peace that is built on the pillars of peace and security, human rights and development. There are, naturally, many views on how this can best be accomplished. Japan hopes that today's briefing will mark the start of more in-depth Council discussions involving a wide range of stakeholders on each mission and mandate.

Mr. Llorenty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing provided today on peacekeeping operations. I should like also to thank the presidency for having convened this debate, at which we can discuss the relevance of current peacekeeping operations and ask ourselves whether these in their current format continue to be the best mechanism that we have to ensure international peace and security.

First of all, I would like to underscore the importance of peacekeeping operations. Today this is the most important instrument at our disposal to maintain peace in places where it is most needed. By the same token, we would like to underscore and pay tribute to the key role played by the troops, military observers, police and civilian personnel that compose the various missions. These men and women are on the ground risking their lives every day to ensure that the various missions can fulfil the goals and tasks with which we have entrusted them. With this in mind, I should like to thank each one of these individuals for their work; we hope that they return safe and sound to their homes after having fulfilled their mission.

It is important to recall that peacekeeping operations are slightly less than 70 years old and that in all this time some 69 missions have been deployed, of which 16 continue to be operational today. Among the most notable successes of the Organization are missions that have contributed to ending conflicts and promoting reconciliation, including in countries of our region such as El Salvador and Guatemala. They have also contributed to stabilizing Haiti.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia has been working for 20 years with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In 1997, the Organization signed an agreement with Bolivia under which it became a troop-contributing country. In 1999, we sent a 70-soldier component to cooperate in the work of closing down the operations of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola; it fulfilled that mission in full.

Bolivia also took part as a troop-contributing country in the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which was in succeeded by the current one, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. In each one of these missions, Bolivian troops acted with the greatest professionalism, always respecting the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and acting in the framework of international law. Bolivia currently contributes military observers to four of the 16 existing missions. We are committed to helping all of them achieve their objectives and, to that end, our personnel act based on the principles I have mentioned.

The United States delegation, which organized today's meeting, encouraged Council members to focus on whether our peacekeeping operations, as they are currently constituted, are still the mechanism best suited to meeting the needs of the people on the ground and achieving the Council's political goals. That is why it is important that we question the current value of every one of our peacekeeping operations. There are three points we should consider in that regard. The first is the political support that every mission needs, from the Government of the country where it is deployed, from other Governments in the region and from the international community in general. The second is that we must always keep in mind the reason that each mission was deployed in the first place. And the third is that we must always keep each mission's specific mandates and goals in the forefront of our minds.

Where the first point is concerned, Bolivia believes that every mission should have the political support of the country or countries where it is deployed. It is impossible to imagine a positive outcome, even when a mission is complying with its mandate, if it cannot depend on the consent of the main parties in every

situation. Should that be the case, the mandate would have to be restructured, even to the extent of questioning its very existence if for one reason or another it cannot rely on the consent of the parties.

That brings me to my second point, which is that for missions to be seen as legitimate by the parties to the conflict, it is essential that they are working for the purposes for which they were conceived and are upholding the principles of our peacekeeping operations. They should therefore be impartial and serve only to help build a lasting peace. They should never be seen or used as an intervention force or be used to help justify regime change. Every peacekeeping operation should respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries in which it intervenes.

With regard to my third point, it is vital for a mission to always have a clear, measurable and achievable mandate. We must use the tools available to us, such as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, to ensure that missions are meeting their goals and fulfilling their mandates. If for any reason they are not, they must be evaluated and their mandates reconfigured. The part of the United Nations system that includes peacekeeping operations has ended up in a vicious circle of self-perpetuating bureaucracies where mandates have become distorted and the bureaucracy has become an end in itself. In other words, we find ourselves in a situation where we see no way out and renew the mandates every year simply to avoid further complications. It is therefore crucial that every peacekeeping operation have a maximum lifespan, after which it must, of course, be evaluated and shut down. If the conflict is still going, a new mission should be established, with new mandates and new goals that should be measurable and achievable in the time allowed.

Before I conclude, I should make one last point, which deserves the Council's full attention, although it is unrelated to the previous ones. It is the issue of the damage that peacekeeping operations themselves can do, such as in the case of the cholera epidemic that has affected Haiti in the past few years, and for whose initial outbreak the Organization has already admitted a degree of responsibility. It is important to ensure that missions always coordinate with local authorities on planning and staffing issues.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that the Plurinational State of Bolivia fully supports the efforts of every peacekeeping operation and is very grateful to their personnel for their work and the sacrifices they make.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for organizing and taking the initiative in today's important debate. It comes at a significant moment. The range and nature of threats to international peace and security are evolving and multiplying and, as the Secretary-General has told us, the United Nations must make changes to its "culture, strategy, structures and operations" in order to respond to those new challenges.

Peacekeeping is an essential, unique and, by many measurements, successful instrument in the peace-and-security toolbox of the United Nations. However, in this day and age, for the Organization to live up to the commitment in the Charter of the United Nations to maintaining peace and security, those operations must not only become more effective, they must improve the contribution they make to sustainable peace. We should also bear in mind that resources are finite and should be used as efficiently as possible — although the starting point is about saving lives, not money. And in order to save lives, we have to prevent and solve conflicts. For that reason, the focus in today's discussion, on the political foundations necessary for peacekeeping operations to succeed, is particularly valuable.

The findings of the three 2015 reviews of the United Nations peace and security architecture all agree on the need for reform and provide a road map to achieve it. It is now time to follow through on their recommendations. At the heart of the reviews is a clear understanding that the United Nations must take a more holistic approach to maintaining peace and security. We welcome the work that is already under way, including the internal review of the Secretariat's peace and security architecture. We hope it will result in a United Nations equipped to respond in a system-wide, well-coordinated fashion to threats to peace and security. We support the nine areas for focusing on reform that the Secretary-General put forward this afternoon, and I would like to elaborate a little on some of them.

First, almost every day the Council hears that there are no military solutions to a particular conflict, and in that regard we must recognize the primacy of politics — meaning that peace can be delivered only on the basis of political solutions that aim to sustain peace. That should guide all peace operations and is

also crucial to the protection of civilians. Building effective political strategies requires a thorough understanding of a particular conflict and its context. It means sometimes asking difficult questions for which the answers will be unique to that particular setting. The Council must therefore be supported in its work and receive input from the Secretary-General with reliable, high-quality conflict analysis, prepared jointly by the whole of the United Nations system. Secretariat briefings should give more comprehensive overviews of a situation, so as to enable the Council to make better-informed decisions. Strategic reviews conducted in advance of mandate renewals should include clear options to help inform Council decisions.

Secondly, the mandates adopted by the Council should be truly fit for purpose. Agreeing on more realistic, context-tailored and flexible mandates will make successful outcomes more likely. Within mandates, tasks should be prioritized, sequenced and adjusted over time. Exit strategies and transitional phases of peacekeeping operations should be analysed and planned at an early stage, in cooperation with all the relevant actors. It is important to understand what success will look like by including clear and measurable objectives accompanied by benchmarks for progress. We should not be afraid to review mandates regularly and make course corrections when needed. Clear objectives and benchmarks are also an important tool for dialogue with the host country, which is crucial. A good example is the Mutual Commitment Framework between the Central African Republic and the international community, in which the responsibilities are clearly delineated and demonstrate what all involved have to bring to the table to deliver peace.

Thirdly, in order to improve the prevention of conflict and the promotion of long-term stability, the Council and the United Nations as a whole must consider all the tools in the toolbox. They should be used more strategically in support of identified political objectives, with the whole of the United Nations system acting in a holistic manner in support of countries. Increased coherence between peacekeeping operations and the United Nations development and humanitarian systems is therefore critical. Police capabilities play an essential role, distinct from that of the military, and should also be integrated. Broader strategies that address the peace continuum should be inclusive and based on full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. And, as we all know but still do not always achieve, and as the Secretary-General rightly said, the inclusion and effective participation of women is key. Regional actors that undertake missions on behalf of the Council, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia, are indispensable, and must be supported, including through predictable financing.

Lastly, the dialogue between the Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries should be strengthened and made more dynamic both for the design and the implementation of mandates. The experiences of those countries are an invaluable source of information for the Council. In addition to listening, the Council should ensure that United Nations troops and police better reflect the diversity of the States Members of the United Nations, meet the requirements and standards and deliver on the task set out in mandates, which requires contributing countries to declare any caveats. Furthermore, the capacity-building needs of peacekeeping should be assessed and supported.

I wish to stress that every peacekeeper and every peacekeeping operation must do all they can when civilians are under imminent threat. And of course, there must be zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse, as the Secretary-General underlined.

The Charter of the United Nations sets forth our commitment to join our strengths in order to maintain international peace and security. Peacekeeping operations are perhaps the most tangible symbol of this objective. In this period of new challenges, we stand ready to work with the Secretary-General, on the Security Council and with the broader United Nations membership to ensure the most effective operations possible.

Mr. Abdoulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, let me extend our thanks to the American presidency of the Security Council for holding today's important debate.

The changing security environment and the complex nature of conflicts make it imperative that we reconsider the effectiveness and utility of tools available for the Security Council to prevent, manage and settle disputes. There is no doubt that peacekeeping operations are among the most important of those tools, which makes it all the more important that we review them so that we can maintain their effectiveness and credibility.

We thank the Secretary-General for his statement and would like to affirm to him that we support all the principles that he suggested.

We welcome the presidency's initiative to shed light on the need to review current mandates to develop and reinforce them. This will help a recommitment to ending conflicts that have gone on for far too long, where some peacekeeping operations have become mere symbols of the inability of the international community to effectively contribute to a final settlement of decades-old disputes.

Consequently, we do not necessarily consider the objective of review as simply an exercise in cost-cutting or achieving significant savings in peacekeeping operation budgets. If we agree that the objective of this review is to find ways of bolstering the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations by making them more purposeful, then we believe that we need to undertake a careful analysis of the political, security and regional environments of peacekeeping operations. In addition, we need to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the attendant tools of regional political initiatives and sanction regimes.

Peacekeeping operations must be approached from the perspective of the continuum of response to conflicts, which means that operation mandates must be developed in a context of ongoing engagement that includes integrated, physical operational and pragmatic approaches, within, of course, the specific context under consideration. Mandates must be restructured or realigned continuously in response to political and operational developments.

It is also important that assessments be based on elements that were proved necessary for the success of those missions, including, for instance, a political process that is supported regionally and internationally, such as the current African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. This was also the case for Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and Côte d'Ivoire before the closure of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, respectively. These were operations that were deemed successful.

Meanwhile, exit strategies for the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti provide two examples where there is no need for an extensive United Nations security presence under a peacekeeping-operation mandate. Rather, the United Nations presence should address the needs of sustaining peacebuilding and reinforcing national capacity-building to enable States and societies to own and develop mechanisms that plant the seeds of conflict prevention.

In addition to a credible framework as one of the conditions for the success of peacekeeping operations, maintaining the trust of the host country in the credibility of the United Nations mission and the resulting cooperation that would lead to the success of such mission must remain a major focus in assessing the relevance of a certain peacekeeping operation to United Nations engagement in settlement efforts. A poignant reminder of the importance of this perspective is seen in the challenges faced by the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. In addition, relations between the Congolese Government with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Malian Government with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali went through critical stages that had a negative impact on the performance and effectiveness of the two missions, which prompted a realignment and restructuring of the missions' roles to make them more responsive to the needs and developments in the two countries.

The previous examples clearly show that the effectiveness and function of peacekeeping operations is a dynamic process requiring an integrated multidimensional assessment and constant revision of a mission's role, mandate and structure. Consequently, no effective review of peacekeeping operations and their development can be undertaken without first reviewing the peace and security architecture of the United Nations, including the United Nations role in sustaining peace by integrating the roles of all United Nations and international bodies' programmes and agencies. This is why the Peacebuilding Commission can play an increasingly important advisory role, as far as every conflict is concerned, in helping the Security Council realign mandates with the comprehensive vision of sustaining peace and addressing the root causes of conflicts.

Close consultations with troop-contributing countries are of the utmost importance, especially during the mandate-design and review stages, in order to incorporate field experience into every mandate in line with the concept of participation and collective

ownership of mandates. For this particular reason, the tripartite consultation mechanism among the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat must be leveraged across deployed missions.

I would like to make six points that we think will contribute to effective mandates in future peacekeeping operations.

First, peacekeeping operations must not be burdened by unrealistic tasks that exceed their capacity and fail to recognize political and operational realities.

Secondly, exit strategies must be worked out in the early stages of mandate development based on clear benchmarks and a specific time frame. These elements should be reviewed periodically to allow the Council to recalibrate the mandate in line with recent developments.

Thirdly, a strategic partnership with the host country must be established and focus on national ownership of dialogue and reconciliation efforts and improved communication to build mutual trust. Such an environment would greatly contribute to the success of the mission while avoiding any obstacles.

Fourthly, sufficient attention must be given to the building of national security capacity to allow the State to assume the responsibility of protecting civilians. Such an approach would eliminate the culture of overdependency by the host country on the police and military components of the mission, which makes it more difficult to end a mandate when the time comes.

Fifthly, synergies and complementaries must be encouraged between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements in the area of conflict resolution, based on the comparative advantages of each. A case in point is the potential opportunity of a partnership with the African Union to address the crises of the continent, although the future of such a partnership depends upon African peace support operations having access to the budget of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Sixthly, new input must be given to the partnership between the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries when implementing the zero-tolerance policy to combat sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations in line with the general framework endorsed by the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 71/278.

Egypt is a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations. As such, we have offered to host the 2018 ministerial meeting on peacekeeping operations. We look forward to cooperating with the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries so that the meeting will represent a qualitative leap in our common effort to develop United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of the United States.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for taking the time to come and talk to us about peacekeeping and, more important, for his efforts and willingness to look at peacekeeping reform in a way in which we can make it more effective for those who need it.

I also would like to thank my colleagues for participating in this important discussion. I think that so much of what they said was valuable but, more important, there is a collective effort to reform peacekeeping so that it does more for people on the ground in a manner in which it is not only efficient but effective. I thank them for taking the time to do that.

If asked what the United Nations does, the average person would most likely say peacekeeping. The Blue Helmet is the most recognizable symbol of how the United Nations extends its presence and shows value in the world. With more than a 100,000 total personnel and a budget close to $8 billion, peacekeeping is the United Nations most powerful tool to promote international peace and security. We recognize in particular the courage of those men and women who risk their lives serving in peacekeeping missions, and we pay tribute to the more than 3,500 peacekeepers who have lost their lives to keep others safe. By drawing troops and resources from many countries, peacekeeping helps share the burden of promoting global security. When peacekeeping works well, we see countries that have been able to end internal conflicts, re-establish democratic political processes and develop their own capacities to protect their people.

I think that we can all agree that peacekeeping is far from perfect. Many of the Security Council's past discussions on reform focused on operations and efficiency issues, and that is all extremely important. Those efforts need to continue but, when I think about United Nations peacekeeping, I go back to what I

learned as a young accountant: go back to the basics and ensure that there are measurables and accountability. We need to work smarter. We need to show results. We need to find value, and not just financial value. We need to focus on what the original intent was. Are we actually on track in accomplishing that intent? Are we meeting the needs of the people?

Because we cannot continue these massive missions forever, we need to focus on the people whom we are supposed to lift up, the peacekeepers who lack the support or the direction that they need and the taxpayers who pay the bills. The simple fact is that, in many cases, United Nations peacekeeping is just not working. In Darfur, a 17,000-strong force designed for yesterday's challenges is not built for the needs of today. In South Sudan, where United Nations staff helped save hundreds of thousands of civilians, those vulnerable people have no hope of returning to a normal life. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government uses the United Nations to neutralize only the armed groups that it wants, while leaving others untouched. Outside of Africa, we have our mission in Kosovo that, if we are honest with ourselves, has no real reason for being.

The risk is that of creating an artificial, subsidized peace that discourages real home-grown resolutions to those crises. That is why we need to think and why we need this kind of honest strategic review. We invite Council members to join us in evaluating each of our peacekeeping missions as their mandates are renewed. Our goal is to identify those missions that lack the underlying political conditions for a resolution, which numerous studies have concluded is central to mission success. To help guide us, we have developed a set of principles to which, we think, missions should be held.

We have already touched on the first principle, which is that missions must support political solutions. The mission in South Sudan, for example, involves a Government entangled in a civil war. At this time there's no credible political path to peace. The Government lacks the incentive to end the conflict, and has made the job more difficult for our peacekeepers. We cannot manage our way out of that problem. While it may be easier to accept and prolong the status quo, we are not doing ourselves or the people on the ground any favours. The Council must commit to bringing its political pressure to bear on non-cooperative Governments.

The second principle is also fundamental. We need host-country cooperation. This is not to say that the Council should shy away from countries in which it is not welcome or forego to exercise its right as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations to intervene when needed. But we need to acknowledge that, time and again, missions have failed to help those on the ground when host Government's chose to obstruct them. In Darfur, the Government sought to restrict our peacekeepers from day one. It delayed visas, prevented freedom of movement and delayed customs clearance for food and equipment. The mission has suffered, which means that the people on the ground have suffered.

Thirdly, peacekeeping mandates must be realistic and achievable. Mandates should be targeted to the challenges facing the country and given the resources and the capabilities to do the job. At the same time, we must avoid mission creep. It is common practice for missions to gradually snowball over time as they pick up increasing tasks and staff. What we end up with is a monster mission with unclear priorities or reporting lines. In Lebanon, for instance, the mission does critical work to maintain stability along the Blue Line but, beyond those core-monitoring tasks, the mission does everything from publishing magazines to providing a navy.

Fourthly, we must have an exit strategy. We should agree early on what success looks like, how to achieve it and how to set the country or region on the path to independence from the mission. These strategies should be considered at the earliest stages of mission planning and should be central to United Nations regular reporting.

Lastly, we must be willing to adjust mandates both when situations improve and when they fail to improve. Lifting up the people of those regions must be our objective. When this is achieved, institutional inertia cannot be allowed to prolong operations. When circumstances fail to progress, we must be willing to draw down or restructure the mission and look at other ways in which to bring about stability.

We have already begun to apply these principles to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The Mission is working in a country in which it is increasingly clear that the Government is preying on its own people. Recent reporting revealed that the State was responsible for human rights violations,

including the killing of 480 civilians. Yet we ask our peacekeepers to support the same Government. That is why the changes that we made to MONUSCO's mandate last week were so critical. Henceforth, we will focus on the protection of civilians and support for the democratic transition of power. We will develop an exit strategy, and we will demand real accountability from troop-contributing countries.

I recognize that much of the commentary about peacekeeping reform in the weeks to come will centre on budgets and troop levels, but I believe that experience shows that funding is no guarantee for success. I also recognize that there are those who say this initiative represents a withdrawal of the United States from the global stage. Nothing could be further from the truth. The United States will continue to lead both here at the United Nations and out in the real world. Part of leadership is knowing when something needs to be fixed and having the will to do something about it. I look forward to working with all Council members to do just that.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.